

**HABS No. CA-2712-B**

Harry Carey Ranch, Caretaker's House  
(Building No. 9A)  
28515 San Francisquito Canyon Road  
Saugus  
Los Angeles County  
California

HABS  
CAL  
19-SAUG,  
1B-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HARRY CAREY RANCH  
Caretaker's House (Building 9A)

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CAL  
19-SAUG,  
1B-

Location: 28515 San Francisquito Canyon Road, Saugus, Los Angeles County, California. UTM Coordinates: 11.0357931.3814901

Present Owner/: Montalvo Properties LLC  
Occupant P.O. Box 58870  
Vernon, CA 90058

Present Use: This building is currently vacant.

Significance: This building is a contributing element of the Harry Carey Ranch Historic District. The district is associated with the historically significant life and work of the film star Harry Carey Sr., as described in the accompanying narrative report.

The Caretaker's House and other adobe structures represent a distinctive vernacular example of Spanish Colonial Revival style and is unique in its use of architectural details, such as built in cabinetry and exposed telephone pole ceiling beams.<sup>1</sup>

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Property records suggest that this building was constructed in 1937. Harry Carey Jr. states that the building was built on the site of the old Trading Post that was destroyed by the 1928 St. Francis Dam flood. While it was not completed nor occupied by 1943, he believes that the Clougherty family finished the construction.<sup>2</sup> The house was constructed as a replacement for the Trading Post. There is no known record of its exact completion date.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leslie Heumann and Helen Wells, "Historic Resources Inventory: Harry Carey Ranch Historic District," DPR523 forms on file with California Office of Historic Places (July 6, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> Harry Carey, Jr., interview, January 26, 2001

<sup>3</sup> Property records, Los Angeles County Assessor's Office. Leslie Heumann and Helen Wells, "Historic Resources Inventory: Harry Carey Ranch Historic District," DPR523 forms on file with California Office of Historic Places (July 6, 1993).

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2. Original and Subsequent Owners: Harry and Olive Carey; John F. Blanchard II and Irene T. Blanchard; Laura Madeline Wagnon and Catherine McCaleb; the Clougherty Packing Company; Montalvo Properties LLC.
3. Architect: Unknown. The design concept is attributed to Harry and Olive Carey, who directed its construction.

Although he and his family appear to have lived on the property from the late 1910s, Harry Carey established legal ownership of the main ranch complex in 1925 when he purchased 160 acres of federal land via a "sale entry." The following year, he expanded the ranch when the government issued him a patent for an adjacent 480 acres as a "homestead – stockraising entry." By the mid-1920s, Carey published an advertising brochure for the commercial venture he operated on the ranch, "Harry Carey's Trading Post," in which he stated that his ranch included a total of 1,200 acres.

A newspaper article dated September 25, 1947 stated that the Careys sold the ranch in 1944 to unnamed owners who planned to operate the property as a dude ranch, but the property was in fact sold in March 1945 to John F. and Irene T. Blanchard. It appears the Blanchards ran into financial difficulties and sold the ranch to two single women, Laura Madeline Wagnon and Catherine McCaleb in 1948. The next long-term owners of the ranch was the Clougherty family, of the Clougherty Packing Company, more commonly known as Farmer John Meats, which purchased the property sometime in the 1950s. The Clougherty family held the property until 1998 before selling to the current owners, Montalvo Properties LLC, the company currently developing the site.<sup>4</sup>

From the 1970s until the Northridge earthquake in 1994, the current ranch caretaker and his family occupied this house. It has since been virtually abandoned.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: It is unknown who constructed or designed this building. Records estimate it was constructed late in Carey's tenure of ownership. It is likely that Carey hired local farm laborers who were out of work for the season after the fruit harvest was completed.

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<sup>4</sup> Joint Tenancy Deed," Harry and Olive Carey to John F. Blanchard, II, and Irene T. Blanchard, recorded April 18, 1945, Deeds 21887:152-154; "Grant Deed," John and Irene Blanchard to Laura Madeline Wagnon and Catherine McCaleb, recorded June 2, 1948, Deeds 27336:165; Grantee – Grantor indexes, Los Angeles County Clerk and Recorder Office; Property records, Los Angeles County Assessor's Office. "Friends bid Farewell to Harry Carey ...," *The Signal* (September 25, 1947), 1.

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5. Original plans and construction: The single-story house is primarily a L-shaped plan. Both the exterior and interior walls are of adobe construction with the exception of a small wood-framed lean-to addition. A cross-gable roof covered in composition sheet roofing tops the house. The house faces north. Because the owners designed the dwelling, there are no existing plans of the building.
6. Alterations and additions: The house has received one addition: a small lean-to addition on the southwest corner of the house. Other alterations include three doorways that have been infilled; one on the western side of the façade is infilled with board formed concrete, and two doorways, on the south wall (east of the chimney) and on the west wall (in the northwest bedroom) have been infilled with adobe bricks, which suggest that they were early alterations. An additional doorway (east of the chimney) is boarded up.

B. Historical Context:

For a more detailed discussion of the historical context of the ranch house and the ranch property, refer to the narrative in HABS No. CA-2712.

Carey started his career as an actor in the emerging film industry in 1908. He worked on the East Coast with D. W. Griffith and Biograph but moved to Southern California in 1912. In 1915, he began working for Universal Studios. From 1917 to 1921, he worked as a writer and co-director with John Ford and is credited with being a major influence on Ford's style of directing. *Straight Shooting* was one of their best known films to come out of the collaboration and it is believed that some of the scenes were shot on the Carey ranch. Carey began working in sound films in 1929, continuing to act primarily in Western films. However, he was nominated for a supporting actor Academy Award in 1940 for a role he played in a non-Western movie, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*.

The Caretaker's House, located just off San Francisquito Canyon Road and nearly a mile east of the main ranch complex, was almost certainly constructed around 1937 but was not completed until after the Careys sold the property in 1945. It appears to be one of the last improvements the Careys made to their ranch. Harry Carey Jr., in a 1993 interview, notes that the Caretaker's House was originally constructed as a replacement for the old Trading Post building. The Harry Carey Trading Post was built in the early 1920s and successfully operated until 1928 when it was destroyed by the flooding of the St. Francis Dam disaster. The Carey Ranch home complex was not damaged since it was located at a higher elevation, above the river wash directly in the path of the flood. As a tourist attraction, the Trading Post catered to the public's general interest in the mythical West and early movie industry. To promote visits from tourists, Carey was known to spend his own money to improve and maintain San Francisquito Road, the main road

into the San Joaquin Valley at the time. In the mid-1920s, Carey invested thousands of dollars to repair frequent washouts of the unpaved road. Despite the loss of the trading post, the Careys retained the ranch and continued to live there for various periods during the 1930s.<sup>5</sup>

In keeping with the architectural style of the other ranch buildings, this building was constructed in the modest, early residential style of the Spanish Colonial Revival period.<sup>6</sup> Common characteristics of this style, as seen in this building, are a low-pitched tile roof (normally side gable) and a long and narrow porch. The porch is typically covered by an extension of the main roof and supported (in unpretentious examples) with wood post with decorative brackets. Interior supporting roof timbers were often exposed. Although several of the doorways on the Caretaker's house were infilled, multiple external doorways were a common element in the Spanish Colonial Revival residences constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, as was the use of adobe construction.

Adobe buildings are one of the earliest forms of construction. Created from a mixture of sand and clay with grass as a binder, the bricks were molded in wood forms and sun dried and then joined with mud mortar. Because the exterior walls were load bearing, they are constructed in an alternating double course, creating a thick wall with deep reveals around the door and window openings. Windows and doorways received large timber lintels for further structural support.<sup>7</sup> As with the construction of the main house, clay from deposits north of the house most likely provided the raw material for the bricks that the crews made on site for this building also.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "Harry Carey Trading Post," brochure, n.d., History Section, Los Angeles Public Library; "The Time Ranger," *The Signal* (October 22, 1995 and April 26, 1996); "Santa Clarita Valley," *The Signal* (April 23, 1995); "The Time Ranger," *The Signal* (April 28, 1996); "The Time Ranger" *The Signal* (October 23, 1994); Michele E. Buttelman, "St. Francis Dam Disaster of March 12, 1928 Remembered," *The Signal* (March 12, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Property Records, County of Los Angeles Office of the Assessor. *California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Form 523, Tesoro Del Valle Survey, CRMS* (1993).

<sup>7</sup> "Brief 5: Preservation of Historic Adobe Buildings." Heritage Preservation Services. [www2.cr.nps.gov/](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/)

<sup>8</sup> *California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Form 523, Tesoro Del Valle Survey, CRMS* (1993).

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Caretaker's House (Building #9A) is a single story adobe building with a L-shaped plan. In keeping with the themes of western architecture that the Careys had established on their property in the 1920s, the building was constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Unlike the grand public buildings most commonly associated with the style, this modest building represents an early residential example of this revival movement. The main façade of the home (north side) is dominated by a full porch. The long front porch, adobe construction, massive central fireplace, and exposed ceiling beams are typical of the revival of this type of construction in California in the 1920s and 1930s.
2. Condition of fabric: The Caretaker's House is currently in poor condition and appears to have suffered most of its structural damage from the Northridge earthquake of 1994. The building received little to no maintenance within the last several years. The interior and exterior walls, nearly all windows and doors, chimney/fireplace and the roof are largely unaltered. One doorway was infilled on each of the north, west and south sides of the building. It is unknown when the rear addition was constructed.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This L-shaped residence measures approximately 55'-0" along the façade, 43'-6" wide along its widest (west) side, and 27'-0" along its east side. Additionally, the front porch is about 6'-0" deep.
2. Foundations: The house rests on a concrete foundation.
3. Walls and structural systems: Both the interior and exterior walls of this building consist of non-reinforced adobe bricks laid in a single course with a mud mortar. The areas above the adobe walls on the building's gable ends are sheathed in vertical board and batten wood siding. The interior and exterior walls are all roughly 1'-0" thick and are covered by a wood-framed roof. Large wood planks (approximately 8" wide and 2" deep) are secured to the exterior and interior walls with lag bolts. There is no apparent pattern to the haphazardly placed braces, indicating that these were added after construction, possible to support the exterior adobe walls.
4. Porches, stoops, and courtyards: The 6'-0" deep, main porch extends the full length of the building's façade (north side). The extended roof,

supported by seven evenly-spaced, square wood posts with decorative brackets, shelters the poured concrete porch. A simple wood balustrade decorates the porch. Property records indicate a 4'-0" x 12'-0" concrete porch was located at the rear entrance of this building as early as 1961. This uncovered porch has since been extended and covers the full length and width of the house. A wood frame awning, not original to the building, is attached to the building, just east of the southern addition.

5. Chimneys: There is one exterior brick chimney original to this building, located on the eastern section of the south side of the house. The chimney extends 1'-10" off the building and is approximately 8'-0" long. The chimney tapers approximately 5' off the ground until it reaches the roofline where it continues (rectangular in shape) about 3' beyond the roof.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The house has four exterior doorways in addition to one on the south side of the building that has been boarded over, and three other infilled doorways. The main entrance is a wide batten door with alternating sized horizontal V-grooved planks, set to the east of the center on the façade and leading onto the front porch. A second doorway on the façade mirrors the main entrance, although it has been infilled with board-formed concrete. A rear (south) entrance, leading to a south concrete porch is located on the south side of the leg of the "L". The third doorway (on the west side of the addition) gives the only access to the rear addition. All doors have square wood lintels.
  - b. Windows and shutters: There are 12 windows located within this building. Four windows on the façade are unique wood casement windows; three lights (two small lights and a taller rectangular light) alternate positions on each sash. Additionally, there are four four-over-four, wood casement windows; two single, three-light, side-hinged wood casement windows; and one unglazed wood window with wood slip sills. An additional window that has been altered to accommodate a window air conditioning unit has four vertical lights within a wood frame window. Most windows have wood slip sills and all have round wood lintels that extend approximately 5" beyond the window opening. Window surrounds are plain.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: A wood frame, cross-gabled roof finished with composition sheet roofing covers the building and is supported by large telephone poles serving as vigas. An extension of that roof, on the façade, shelters the front porch. An attached shed roof covers the rear addition.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves project approximately 3'-0" along all sides of the house except for the façade. The eaves expose wood rafters (2"x 6") on all sides of the roof except for the overhang at gable ends, which are finished with wood fascia.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: A large central room, encompassing over half of the building, dominates the floor plan. A small kitchen (15'-0" x 6'-9") is found on the northern side separating the central public room from a west bedroom. An additional bedroom and bath are located within the southwest portion of the home. Generally, access to all rooms is via another room; there are no hallways. The function and use of the southern addition, only accessed from a separate outside entrance, is unknown. A single, large fireplace is centered on the building's southern wall, within the public space. All interior walls are adobe (approximately 12" wide); and are finished with paint over a whitewash.
2. Stairways: None
3. Flooring: The majority of the floors in the house are covered with shag carpet with linoleum finishing the kitchen and bathroom floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All rooms are finished with whitewash and paint applied over the adobe bricks. Ceilings are generally finished with darkly-stained wood planking. The ceiling in the main room exposes the large telephone poles creating the structural vigas that run the length of the room (east-west).
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: All interior doors are original, wide plank, vertical wood batten doors with iron hardware and wide, rectangular wood lintels in the frame above.



- b. Windows: The simple, wood molding around the window is similar to the molding around the doors.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: The original cabinets found in the kitchen and enclosing a closet in the northwest bedroom are nearly identical to the cabinet work in the Main House (Building #5). The cabinets in the kitchen are constructed of painted, batten-style wood with painted steel hardware. The closet cabinetry is darkly-stained and finished with a high-gloss sealant and hardware similar to the kitchen cabinets.

The fireplace is located within the central room, centered on its south wall, and consists of a large, brick hearth (approximately 2'-0" wide and 8'-0" long) with a square wood beam extending about 2' beyond the fireplace on both ends creating a mantel with bookshelves below. The lower portion of the fireplace is faced with rectangular-shaped stones. Above the mantel, the fireplace tapers to the ceiling and the original brick of the fireplace is exposed. A continuous beam with a ledge is attached to the perimeter walls of this room approximately 2' below the ceiling.
- 7. Hardware: Most hardware appears to be original. The front door has a brass doorknob and interior doors have iron latches.
- 8. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Heating, air conditioning, and ventilation: This building appears to have been constructed without a heating or cooling system. The house relied upon the inherent insulation factors of adobe construction. A supplementary heating system was added to the central room, which required the metal venting that penetrates the eastern exterior wall of this room. In addition, a window air conditioning unit is located in this room as well as in the northwest bedroom.
  - b. Electricity: The house was constructed with electricity.
  - c. Plumbing: The house was constructed with modern indoor plumbing.

D. Site:

- 1. Historic landscape design: This building has not been used for many years and little of the original landscaping remains. The house faces north and is sited on approximately 3 acres of level ground between a hill and the wash of the San Francisquito Canyon. A dirt driveway leads from San Francisquito Canyon Road to the dirt, circular drive. A large tree sits north of the house and appears to have been the center point for this drive. Cacti line the south side of the driveway entrance. A decaying wood plank fence, running east-west to the wash, is attached to the west side of the

house. The fence continues from the northern east corner of the building to the garage, with a gate giving access to the rear yard, and from the west side of the garage to the hill side. To the rear of the yard is a large, plowed field. The hillside to the east is spotted with a variety of trees.

2. Outbuildings: There are four outbuildings located at the site of the caretaker's house. A detached garage (Building 9B) is sited to the east of the house. Each side of this square building measures 20'-0". The shed roof appears to be concealed by parapet walls. The one-story, two-car garage is covered with V-grooved wood siding with corner boards and has an exterior-mounted, sliding garage door. While property records estimate the garage was built in 1932, the building's construction type could date it to 1950s or later.

Just northwest of the garage and northeast of the house is surrounded by a round brick and mortar wall (approximately 3'-0" in height). A wood-framed, wood shingled gable roof shelters the capped well. As early as 1957, a water reservoir built into the hillside southeast of the house, is recorded on property records. It measures 10'-0" x 14'-0", 6'-0" in height and consists of 1'-0" thick board-formed, concrete walls with a buttress projecting from the northwest side. A collapsed, wood frame, front-gable roof covers this structure. South of the house, is the remnant of an additional water storage facility which measured approximately 50'-0" x 20'-0".<sup>9</sup>

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: none
- B. Early Views: none
- C. Interviews:

Harry Carey, Jr., January 26, 2001. Durango, CO. Telephone interview by Meta Bunse, JRP Historical Consulting Services. Davis, CA.

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<sup>9</sup> Property Records, County of Los Angeles Office of the Assessor. *California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Form 523*, Tesoro Del Valle Survey, CRMS (1993).

D. Bibliography:

Deeds, County of Los Angeles Office of the Recorder.

Grantee – Grantor indexes, Los Angeles County Clerk and Recorder Office.

Real Property Records, County of Los Angeles Office of the Assessor, December 2000.

California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Form 523, Tesoro Del Valle Survey, by Leslie Heumann and Helen Wells of CRMS, 1993.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Although the Harry Carey Ranch property was occupied and owned by the Careys from the 1920s through 1945, and the Clougherty family from the mid-1950s through 1998, the chain of ownership is not completely documented for the period of about ten years between 1945 and the mid 1950s. Research conducted for this project revealed that John and Irene Blanchard, as well as Laura Wagon and Catherine McCaleb, owned the ranch for a short time in the late 1940s. The real property records of Los Angeles County should contain further information about who else may have owned the property during this period, as well as who sold the property to the Cloughertys.

F. Supplemental Material:

1. Location maps were re-produced from the DPR523 forms dated July 6, 1993, on file with California Office of Historic Places.
2. Sketch floor plans of the Caretaker's House (Building 9A), show the approximate floor plan as of November 3, 2000.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

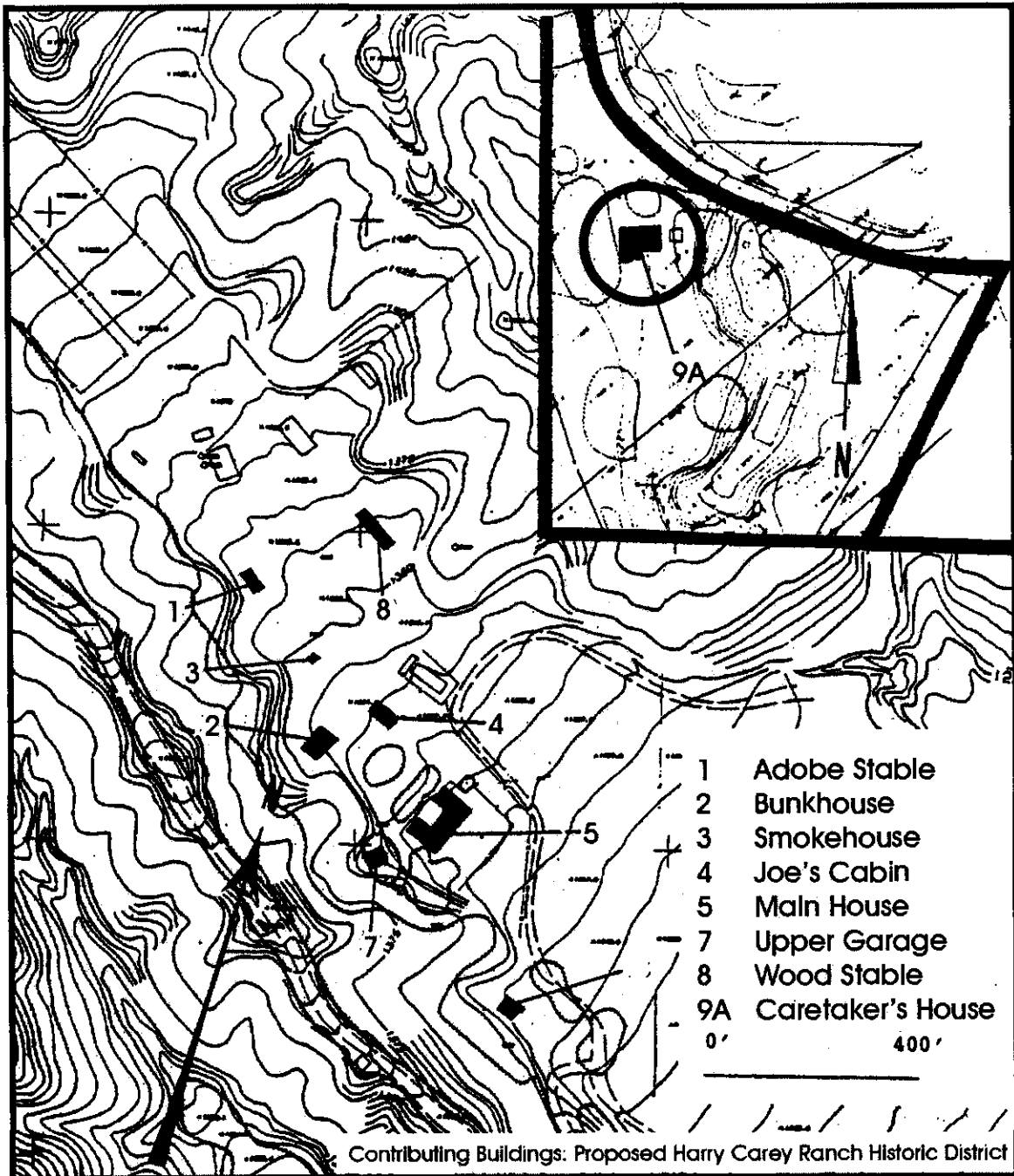
This project was sponsored by Montalvo Properties & Evans-Collins Community Builders. Meta Bunse, Steve Mikesell, and Toni Webb, of JRP Historical Consulting Services, conducted the field inspection and recordation in November 2000. Meta Bunse and Toni Webb conducted research in various on-line resources, as well as the Sacramento Office of Historic Preservation, Santa Clarita Branch of the Los Angeles County Library, Santa Clarita Valley Historical

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Society, William S. Hart Regional Park, Los Angeles County Assessor's Office, Los Angeles County Clerk/Recorder's Office, and the Los Angeles Public Library. Toni Webb and Meta Bunse wrote the text for the individual building forms, while Meta Bunse wrote the narrative report with contributions from Toni Webb and Steve Mikesell (specifically the history of the Western as a film genre). Toni Webb produced the sketch floor plans and Bill Dewey produced the photography.

The Los Angeles District Army Corps of Engineers, in consideration of a Section 404 Clean Water Act permit for the Tesoro Del Valle Project in Los Angeles County, California, found that the Tesoro del Valle Project, would have an effect on the Harry Carey Ranch Historic District, a property eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. With this finding of effect, the Corps, pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f), has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (in concurrence with Montalvo Properties, LLC) regarding the historic Harry Carey Ranch property. In compliance with the MOA, the Caretaker's House (Building 9A) is slated for demolition.

LOCATION MAP



SKETCH FLOOR PLAN

